MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE METROLINK AND RAIL NETWORKS SUB-COMMITTEE
HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2018

PRESENT

Bolton
David Chadwick (LAB)
Bolton
Stuart Haslam (CON)
Manchester
Eddy Newman (LAB)
Manchester
Dzidra Noor (LAB)
Rochdale
Councillor Neil Emmott (LAB)
Stockport
Kate Butler (LAB)
Stockport
Steve Gribbon (LIB DEM)
Stockport
John Taylor (LAB)
Tameside
Warren Bray (LAB)
Tameside
Doreen Dickinson (CON)
Trafford
David Hopps (CON)
Wigan
Lynne Holland (LAB)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Danny Vaughan
Head of Metrolink, TfGM
Victoria Mercer
Metrolink Service Delivery Manager, TfGM
Caroline Whittam
Acting Head of Rail, TfGM
Owain Roberts
Rail Service Development Officer, TfGM
Nicola Ward
Governance & Scrutiny, GMCA

ALSO PRESENT

Lucja Majewski
Transpennine Express (TPE)
Aline Frantzen
KAM
Raj Chandarana
Northern
Alexander Bray
Cross Country

MR/18/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Councillor Adrian Alexander (Oldham) and Councillor Michael Cordingley (Trafford).
MR/18/25  CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed representatives from TfGM and the train operators to the meeting.

MR/18/26  DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MR/18/27  MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2018 were submitted for approval.

Members asked whether there was an update on the campaign to increase awareness of priority seats on Metrolink. It was confirmed that there had been a set of recorded messages prepared for use on the Metroshuttle and as part of the social media and marketing campaign for the by-laws on trams. Priority seating will be a different colour to standard seating and there would be further work to raise awareness of who these seats are aimed at.

RESOLVED/-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October were approved as a correct record.

MR/18/28  METROLINK SERVICE PERFORMANCE

The TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee considered the report of the Head of Metrolink that set out the operational performance summary for Period 7 (16 September 2018 – 13 October 2018).

Victoria Mercer, Metrolink Service Manager, TfGM introduced the report and highlighted key aspects including:

- A growth in patronage, up 5% year to date, with an estimated end of year total prediction of 42.4m passengers.
- A number of third party incidents on the Metrolink system which had been managed well.
- A reduction in complaints, reported crime and anti-social behaviour over the period, however there had been a slight increase in December due to the increased recording of by-law breeches since the campaign began.
- A positive uptake of the ‘early bird’ and ‘early bird plus’ offer with over 7000 tickets purchased during the last 3 weeks, and an increased use of the ‘Get Me There’ app.
- In preparation for the switch to zonal fares in January 2019, an awareness campaign had been launched. There had also been a trial on contactless payment machines which had proved successful to date.

Members reported that there had been two incidents at Brooklands Station over the past couple of weeks, including a car knocking down a wall and ending up on the tracks. Officers
were praised for the prompt response which resulted in trams running again by 9am. The other incident involved a tram being wedged on the platform due to overcrowding and members asked whether there were any plans to increase the capacity at peak times. Officers reported that there were investigations underway to look at how the tram mechanics allowed this incident to occur, and alongside this TfGM were looking at ways to increase capacity on the Altrincham line in the new year, through the introduction of additional double units. There was also some work underway to investigate the potential of use of more of the network rail infrastructure through tram/train projects. A member added how the single track element of this line was capping the capacity, and that officers should also consider the potential of shorter route trams from Sale or Timperley to Manchester.

Members raised some concern over the planned enhancement to the Ashton service, as the junction in the town centre already suffers from grid lock and the additional tram priority would increase the pressure on this junction and cause further traffic delays. Members urged TfGM to involve local highways officers in any such proposals to ensure local knowledge could be shared, to reduce the potential wider impact. Officers gave assurance that UTC highways engineers and colleagues who oversee bus planning had been engaged throughout the process of testing the Ashton line for such changes, which took place in October, and proved successful. The remodelling of the bus station would further alter other junctions in the area, and therefore a wider discussion with Local Authority officers had begun to ensure the balancing of priorities and minimal impact to other traffic in the area. A member asked that there be consideration to the possible delay of the scheme to ensure highways officers were satisfied with proposals, DV offered to have further discussions about this scheme with the relevant elected members.

Members asked for further information in relation to the users of the ‘earlybird’ tickets, as to whether they were first time users or normally peak time users. Officers reported that this data was not available, but that an increase of new user on the app may indicate that they are new users of Metrolink.

A member of the committee praised TfGM for their programme of restorative justice work for offenders and asked how many of the recent complaints about security were relating to antisocial behaviour. It was confirmed that the majority of security complaints were in relation to ASB, but that the recent ‘Metrolink Monsters’ campaign was looking to address customer behaviour and tighten conduct on trams. Members added that it could be a good idea to engage schools in this scheme, by asking them to design future monster characters.

Members asked whether consideration had been given to tram/train projects in other areas, such as Marple or Stockport. Officers confirmed that there were many aspirations for tram/train projects within the 5 year delivery plan, but that there were lessons to be learnt from other areas to ensure that there is potential viability for such schemes.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That the Metrolink Service Performance update be noted.
2. That DV and Councillor Warren Bray further discuss the planned service changes for the Ashton line to ensure the impact on other traffic is minimised.

3. That TfGM consider how schools could be engaged with the ‘Metrolink Monster’ campaign to increase awareness of the tram by-laws with children.

MR/18/29 LOCAL RAIL SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND STATION UPDATE

The TfGM Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee considered the report of the Head of Rail that informed Members of local rail service performance and station matters within Greater Manchester and its travel to work area for heavy rail in period 7 (16 September 2018 – 13 October 2018).

The following items from the report were highlighted:

- Northern had re-instated the majority of their timetable on the 3 September, with the final changes to be implemented by the 18 December.
- The Bolton corridor electrification work had been delayed by some snagging work, however there had been a recent re-introduction of weekend services.
- Network Rail performance had declined in period 8, and PPM (Public Performance Minute) performance had declined from the same period in 2017 for both Northern and Trans Pennine Express. This was partly related to the delay in new TPE trains until Spring 2019.
- Industrial action for Northern Rail staff continues, which was planned to impact Saturday services until 29 December.
- Over Christmas and New Year there will be increased repair works on the line, which will have further impact to services.
- TfGM have prepared applications for 10 Local Stations and have submitted them for ‘Access for All’ funding to improve their disabled access. The outcome of these applications will be known in April 2019.

Members of the committee asked for clarification as to who was responsible for the clearing of leaves from the line. It was confirmed that this was the responsibility of Network Rail.

Members expressed their dissatisfaction with the number of short-form trains resulting in passengers not being able to embark and make their journeys. They felt that it was unjust that the people of Greater Manchester should be subject to continued poor service and that the people of Bolton deserved an apology from Network Rail for the delay of these works. Operators reported that the use of short-form trains was as a result of wider infrastructure delays, including the electrification of the Bolton line, which has led to a lack of vehicles. To counteract this issue, operators were escalating train refurbishment programmes, and borrowing fleet from other areas and it was envisaged that there would be improvements to the timetable once the Bolton line is opened in May 2019. Members further asked whether patronage levels had impacted on revenue levels since the shortfall of trains had become evident. Operators offered to present this information to members at a future meeting.
A member added that there had been an issue on the Westhaughton line with wheel-flats which was hoped to be resolved once the majority had been replaced by Autumn 2019.

There was some discussion as to the additional Scottish Services for May 2019 and whether they would provide a local stopping service. It was reported that these services would be designed to go straight to destination, but that there may be some additional stops off peak. Officers added that the Southport to Manchester southside service would be reinstated in December, and would provide extra stoppage to Bolton.

Members asked whether there had been any progress in relation to rest days on Sundays. It was confirmed that the majority of changes to the Sunday timetable were short notice withdrawals as a result of planned works from Network rail. There were ongoing conversations as to how to minimise the impact of planned works in 2019. Officers added that the unions were on the verge of agreement with the ASEF but that resolution in relation to the Saturday strike action (between Northern and RCN) needed to be found before they would commit to a final decision.

Members urged that there be a strong media campaign to publicise the train fare regulations and the requirement to purchase a ticket before boarding. Operators confirmed that there was a campaign currently underway, including notices at all stations including Revenue Protection Officers giving final warning notices over the first couple of weeks. Members further suggested that this information could be broadcast over station intercoms, and raised concern that some passengers would need time to begin to understand the touch screen ticket machines, and therefore revenue protection staff should use some discretion to ensure that the new technology does not become a barrier to travel.

Members reported that at a recent Northern stakeholder meeting it was reported that there would be 50,000 hours of training required to enable the new trains to come into operation. It was reported that training had already begun, and lessons learnt as to how to roll out the training in early 2019.

With regards to the ‘Access for all’ funding, members asked that consideration be given to those stations which are unsuccessful in their application as to alternative options for bringing about these improvements. Officers reported that this would be done through the Station Partnership Workstream, overseen by the Alliance Board with an ultimate objective that all stations in GM are accessible.

Members commented that the cleanliness of stations remained a concern. It was reported that the current contract for station cleaning was currently under tender as it was not fit for purpose.

Members reported that they had received complaints from members of the public who had not received satisfactory customer service from train operators, and that the online information in relation to ‘delay repay’ was not accurate. Operators recognised that the late cancellation of services was very frustrating and stated that they were looking to improve communications in relation to last minute changes. Response rates to complaints had improved, but it was recognised that more could be done. Recent internal improvements had
included the relocation of the social media team to improve the relationship with customer services. Officers further confirmed that delay repay comes into effect from Sunday 16 December.

Members expressed concern that some stations only had one ticket machine and therefore passengers were unable to purchase tickets before boarding and at risk of receiving a fine. It was reported that there would be a review of platform ticket availability to reduce the risk of passengers missing trains and an additional push for members of the public to get the app and purchase tickets via their phone. Also, a new ombudsman has been established to assist passengers who feel they have been unfairly treated, or not received a satisfactory outcome from the internal complaints procedure.

**RESOLVED/-**

1. That the Local Rail Service Performance and Station update be noted.

2. That TfGM look to broadcast information about paying before boarding at all rail stations over the intercom.

3. That information on loss of revenue as a result of short form trains and reduced patronage be presented at a future meeting.

**MR/18/30 DECEMBER 2018 AND MAY 2019 TIMETABLE**

Owain Roberts, Rail Service Development Officer TfGM took members through a presentation which detailed the changes to some Northern and Transpennine Express Service groups, provided an update on the Bolton Corridor electrification, detailed the new rolling stock and gave members a look ahead to May 2019.

A member raised concerns about the lack of services to Heaton Chapel and asked for assurance that the additional services (7.51 Hazel Grove) was the first step in improving services to these stations. Officers reported that Northern Rail had assured that these gaps in service would be filled.

**MR/18/31 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The next meeting of the Metrolink and Rail Networks Sub Committee would be held Friday 5 April 2019.